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SCHMEISER, OLSEN & WATTS
22 CENTURY HILL DRIVE
SUITE 302
LATHAM, NY 12110

EXAMINER

MILEF, ELDA G

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3692

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/819,462	Applicant(s) BAUMANN ET AL.	
	Examiner Elda Milef	Art Unit 3692	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 October 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 20-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 20-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Claims

1. This office action is in response to the amendments submitted by the applicants on 10/27/2008

- Claims 10-19 are cancelled.
- Claims 1 is amended.
- Claims 20-33 are new.
- Claims 1, 20-33 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 20, 21, 23-28, 30-33, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,507,826 Maners in view of *University of New Hampshire Financial and Administrative Procedures*,

(http://www.finadmin.unh.edu/pol_proc/chapter_23/pro23_051.html; Issued by

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Computing and Information Services; Issued Date:01/01/94; retrieved date 9/11/06)

hereinafter, Procedures in further view of Furphy et al. (hereinafter Furphy, US Patent No.6,882,983).

Re Claim 1: Maners discloses the invention substantially as claimed including in a method for approving and paying an invoice for commodities (Abstract), the steps of:

receiving, by a front end server from a requestor, a purchase request for goods (Col. 2 Lines 6-26), said goods having a designation denoting that the goods are receivable which requires a positive confirmation from the requestor to provide authorization to pay for the goods, said designation being stored in the front end server (Col. 5, lines 40-50; Col. 6 lines 48-67 (dependent invoices can be marked as “incomplete”, refused, or “operational hold”, Fig. 4); an invoice processing system comprising the front end server, an application server and a back end server, said back end server coupled to the front end server via the application server, said front end server comprising a positive confirmation application and a database, said application server comprising a positive confirmation bridge. Maners discloses marking said commodity as “posted” status which indicates that the invoice has been processed by the MicroEDI server and determined valid and submitted to the company accounts payable system for payment processing. –see Fig. 4 and col. 6 lines 48-67;

sending, by the front end server to the back end server, a requisition comprising requirements relating to the received purchase request and including the designation; generating, by the back end server in response to receiving the requisition sent by the

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front end server, said purchase order based on the requisition. In fig. 2, Maners disclose network server 212, an application server Micro EDI and an SQL Server (included in the micro EDI database 214). The application server can process invoices between a vendor and a client's accounting system. see Fig. 2 and related text and cols. 4-8;

said back end server transmitting or delivering the purchase order to a vendor that can provide the requested goods; ("This purchase order information is considered part of the reference data 218 that is exchanged between the company accounting computer system 206 and the Micor EDI database 214 via the local area network 204) col. 7, lines 25-29;

after said transmitting or delivering the purchase order to the vendor, said application server receiving an invoice from the vendor, said invoice referencing the purchase order and requesting payment for the goods; after said application server receiving the invoice from the vendor, said positive confirmation bridge marking the invoice to indicate that said positive confirmation is required; Col. 5, lines 40-50; Col. 6 lines 48-67 (dependent invoices can be marked as "incomplete", refused, or "operational hold", Fig. 4);

after said positive confirmation bridge marking the invoice, said back end server receiving the invoice from the application server; Maners discloses marking said commodity as "posted" status which indicates that the invoice has been processed by the MicroEDI server and determined valid and submitted to the company accounts payable system for payment processing. –see Fig. 4 and col. 6 lines 48-67;

responsive to said back end server receiving the invoice from the positive

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confirmation bridge, said back end server communicating transaction information pertaining to the invoice to the front end server; Maners teaches an invoice processing system including an invoice processing server providing a payment authorization signal to an accounting computer system to initiate processing payment of the invoice in response to determining the invoice is authorized for payment.-see Abstract and col. 9 lines 23-44.

after said communicating transaction information, said positive confirmation application providing notice to the requestor that the invoice has been received and that the invoice includes the required positive confirmation; Maners teaches an invoice processing system including an invoice processing server providing a payment authorization signal to an accounting computer system to initiate processing payment of the invoice in response to determining the invoice is authorized for payment.-see Abstract and col. 9 lines 23-44.

after said providing notice to the requestor, said front end server receiving a response from the requestor for authorizing or rejecting payment for the goods. Maners disclose that the notification to the vendor is via the website –see Fig. 4 “The vendor, via the vendor computer system 210, can select to view details of any one of the invoices displayed on the grid, add or change information in any of the incomplete invoices shown on the grid, or add a new invoice to its grid of invoices. When an invoice is in "posted" status, the invoice has been processed by the MicroEDI Server 202 and determined valid and submitted to the company accounts payable computer system 206 for payment processing. When an invoice is in "incomplete" status, the

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invoice still needs information from the vendor to be ready for validation and posting into the company accounts payable computer system 206. An invoice that has been assigned a "refused" status has been rejected for payment. And an invoice that is assigned "operational hold" status is being held from validation and posting until certain information and/or authorization can be obtained by the MicroEDI Server 202.

Typically, an "operational hold" status for an invoice requires additional information or authorization to be entered into the MicroEDI Server

202 by company personnel.-col. 6 lines 48-67;

Maners does not specifically disclose if the received response is for authorizing payment, then creating an automated receipt transaction file including a goods receipt and entering said transaction file into an enterprise resource planning system for payment. Procedures discloses these limitations on pages 1-11, particularly page 1, underlined text and lines 3-5 wherein Procedures discloses ("Special conditions...are also captured on the receipt."), also refer to pages 3, 5, 8, and 10. Procedures discloses a three way match system including matching information disclosed on a purchase order, invoice, and received goods, and the generating of a receipt. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Maners to include the three way matching disclosed by Procedures because this would have assured that goods ordered were indeed delivered per purchase order and approved by recipient.

Although Maners discloses "The Micro EDI Database 214 normally stores invoice

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data 216 and other related reference data 218. The MicroEDI Server 202 can receive/transmit invoice data 216 and other related reference data 218 with the company's computer system 206 handling the accounting functions for the company...can receive/transmit certain invoice data from/to the computer system 210 at the vendor site." (col. 5 lines 4-21) as well as the use of Internet and Intranet(col. 3 line 41 to col. 5 line 22) , Maners does not explicitly disclose responsive to a response entered by said requestor rejecting payment, creating an e-mail notification to accounts payable for returning said invoice to said vendor. Furphy however, teaches a communication interface and notification of buying company or selling company in resolving discrepancies between the invoice and purchase order data. col. 4 lines 18-35. and E-mail notification –see Fig. 8 and related text; col. 15 lines 49-65. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include in the invoice processing system of Maners and the three way match system of Procedures the ability to send an e-mail notification to accounts payable as taught by Furphy since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Re claims 20, 21, 23: Maners discloses after said front end server receiving the response, said server recoding the response in the database; wherein received response is for authorizing payment for the goods; wherein the received response is for rejecting payment for the goods. "invoice information received from a vendor computer

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system is validated in real-time before acceptance for posting in the company's accounting computer system.-see col. 5 lines 47-49, "An invoice that has been assigned a "refused" status has been rejected for payment." –see col. 6, lines 59-60.

Re claim 24: Maners discloses providing notice to the requestor to a location where positive confirmation can be performed. "And an invoice that is assigned an 'operational hold' status is being held for validation and posting until certain information and/or authorization can be obtained by the Micro EDI server202. Typically, an 'operational hold' status for an invoice requires additional information or authorization be entered into the MicroEDI Server 202 by company personnel." Col. 6 lines 60-67; and notification of authorization agent in col. 9, also col. 11 claims 5,8.

Re claims 25, 26: Maners do not specifically disclose wherein the application server further comprises a confirmation interface to the database, Furphy however teaches a communication interface provided to both the buying and selling companies to resolve discrepancies between the purchase order data and the invoice data. Col. 4 lines 32-35; col. 5 lines 20-28; col. 8 lines 33-41 response via interface. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include in the invoice validation system of Maners the ability to validate an invoice via an interface as taught by Furphy since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Claim 27 has similar limitations found in claims 1 and 20 in combination, and therefore is rejected by the same art and rationale.

Claims 28, 30-33 have similar limitations found in claims 21, 23-26 respectively, and therefore are rejected by the same art and rationale.

3. Claims 22 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maners, Procedures, and Furphy as applied to claim 21 above, and further in view of Gershenfeld, (Gershenfeld, Nancy. "Client-server: What Is It and Are We There Yet?" Online. Medford: Mar. 1995. Vol. 19, Iss. 2; pg. 60, 5 pages).

Re claim 22: Maners discloses "When an invoice is in "posted" status, the invoice has been processed by the Micor EDI server 220 and determined valid and submitted to the company accounts payable computer system 206 for payment processing." Col. 6 lines 52-55; Fig. 4. Maners, Procedures, and Furphy do not specifically disclose notifying a back end server via a requisition bridge. It is old and well known in the computer networking art that servers, LANS, and networks are connected using bridges, also commonly known as routers or gateways as evidenced by Gershenfeld p. 2 para. 6 ("LANs now connect many servers...A series of LANs can be strung together with bridges...") It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include in the invoice and transaction processing methods and systems of Maners, Procedures, and Furphy the ability to connect LANS via a bridge as taught by Gershenfeld since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements,

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and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Claim 29 has similar limitations found in claim 22, and therefore is rejected by the same art and rationale.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments filed 10/27/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Regarding the applicant's argument that Maners does not disclose the limitations relating to a purchase order and an invoice referencing the purchase order as recited in claim 1. The applicant suggests that Maners only concerns "orphan invoices." The applicant's attention is directed to **Figure 4** wherein Maners shows a computing interface including the invoice number referencing an order number. The system of Maners further discloses that the server can receive invoice information from vendors to accept two types of invoices for processing i.e., dependant and orphan invoices. The order numbers containing five digits e.g., order no. 77888 are associated with dependant invoices and the invoice contains reference information **i.e., a valid purchase order number** (emphasis added). The order numbers containing a "0" in the order number column are associated with orphan invoices because the invoice is missing order reference information such as a purchase order number. Maners clearly discloses the above in col. 5 lines 40-67. "Another advantage that the MicroEDI Server

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202 provides to an invoice processing system over the known prior art is that the MicroEDI Server 202 can receive invoice information from vendors to accept two types of invoices for processing. The first type of invoice is based on orders issued out of a company's purchasing computer system which typically is part of the company's accounting computer system 206. In this case, the invoice information received from a vendor computer system is validated in real-time before acceptance for posting in the company's accounting computer system. This type of invoice processing is directly dependent on previously generated (preexisting) orders, such as purchase orders, service orders, or work orders. These dependent invoices always have order reference information included with the dependent invoice. Prior art EDI invoice handling systems typically are only able to handle these types of dependent invoices where the order reference information, such as a purchase order number, is always included with the invoice information. The present invention can also process invoices that do not have order reference information, such as the purchase order number. These types of invoices will be called orphan invoices hereinafter."

Conclusion

5. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elda Milef whose telephone number is (571)272-8124. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday -Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kambiz Abdi can be reached on (571)272-6702. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR.

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Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Kambiz Abdi/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3692

Elda Milef
Examiner
Art Unit 3692